

A
L E T T E R
TO THE
Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLEY.

[Price Two-Pence.]

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

A
L E T T E R

T O T H E

Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLEY.

By a GENTLEWOMAN.



L O N D O N :

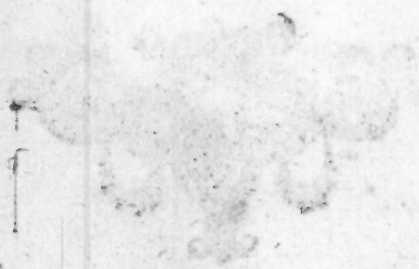
Sold at the Foundery, in Upper Moorfields; and at
Mrs. Englefield's, at the Bible, in West-Street near
the Seven Dials. 1764.

LETTER

TO THE

Rev. Mr. John W. West

BY A GENTLEMAN



Printed by J. W. West, at the Press of the American Book Concern, No. 215 North Second Street, Philadelphia, Pa.



A

L E T T E R

T O T H E

Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLEY.

Laton-Stone, Nov. 8, 1764.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I HAVE never yet had an Opportunity of fully laying before you, the Reasons of my coming to reside at this Place, and the Nature of my Employment here, which I will now take the Liberty to do.

DURING my former Abode among this People, they were often laid on my Mind in Prayer, and

I was often greatly comforted, by an Hope, that they would one Day hear and receive the Gospel.

REMOVING from these Parts in *February*, 1761, those Thoughts were taken from me, for a Season: But after a Year and an half, being providentially called to return hither, the same Thoughts returned into my Mind. Yet I could not easily consent to leave *London*, 'till I had, with my Friend, laid it before the LORD; being fully persuaded, that if it was of GOD, he would make plain Paths for our Feet.

Soon after, many outward Providences confirmed us, in our Belief, that it was GOD's Appointment. His Spirit also shone clearer upon our Souls, and convinced us, it was a Cross which he called us to take up. One Day in particular, when my Friend and I were laying it before him in Prayer, he condescended to assure her, that he would *not send us a Warfare at our own Charges*. I thought, *Let not my LORD be angry, and I will ask yet one Sign more*. This was the settling of an Affair, which seemed to Man impossible. And it was settled within a few Days. O God, who can stay thy Hand?

BUT no sooner was my Design mentioned to others, than it was vehemently opposed. One in particular charged me not to go, saying, "It was all a Scheme of the Devil." Either that Night, or the next, I dreamed I was at *Luton-Stone*, and a great Number of all Sorts of People about me. I was prest in Spirit to speak to them; but being pained at the Appearance of many gay ones among them, I said, in the
Anguish

Anguish of my Soul, "LORD, what do I here among this People?" Immediately I thought JESUS came down, and stood just before me. The Brightness of his Presence so overcame me, that there was no Strength left in me. He said, "I will send you to a People, that are not a People; and I will go with you: Bring them unto me. I will lay my hand upon them, and heal them: Fear not; only believe." He then disappeared, leaving me quite penetrated with his Presence and his Words. After having wept some Time, I thought I told the People what the LORD had said. About half seemed serious and attentive, and desirous of being separated from the rest. I thought I was to find them a Place to meet in: In order to which, I was obliged to walk over a Floor no thicker than a Wafer: However, I went over, and not a Splinter gave Way under my Feet. Soon after I awoke with these Words, "The Mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."

OUR Fears were now removed, and on *March* 24, 1763, we came to this House, in obedience to what we believed the Will of our heavenly Father. We came, trusting in him; and, blessed be GOD, we have not trusted him in vain.

FROM the first Hour we found his Presence with us, but did not see, for what End we were come. We therefore *stood still to see his Salvation*. Mean Time we determined, To live by Rule in every Thing: And in order to supply the Want of the Public Means, from which we were in great Measure cut off, we agreed to spend an Hour every Evening, Part in reading to the Family, and Part in private Prayer.

The first Book we read was, "The Rebuke to Backsliders, and Spur to Loiterers." And Glory be to God, our Meeting has hitherto never been in vain.

IN about a Week, a poor Woman whom I had formerly talked with, coming to ask Charity, desired to know, if she might not come when we went to Prayers? I told her, She might at seven in the Evening. She did so, as did two or three more soon after. We then appointed them to come on *Thursday* Nights. In a little Time they were increased to above Twenty. We now thought it best, To talk with them, and that as closely as we could. Some were quickly offended and came no more. Some appeared to be convinced of Sin. These we desired to come to us on *Tuesday* Nights; and the second Time we met, two of them found Peace with God.

A LITTLE before this, we judged the Time was come to have Public Preaching here. This was a close Trial to *Me*, such as few can conceive, unless they have been in the same Situation. But I knew, whosoever would not *forsake all*, could not be CHRIST's Disciple; Seeing He had said, *If any Man love Father or Mother more than me, he is not worthy of me.*

WE then applied to you, and the next *Sunday*, May the 25th, Mr. Murlin preached the first Sermon. This continued every other *Sunday*, though not without considerable Opposition. In *November*, Mr. Morgan received twenty-five into the Society, and divided them into two
Classes.

Classes. Ah LORD! How many of these shall I meet in the Resurrection of the Just!

BUT a new Scene now opened. The Reasons on which I proceeded, I will lay before you as plainly as I can.

FROM a child I have ever believed, God had appointed me for some Work, in which I should be much blest if I was faithful; but that if I took up with any Thing less than I was called to, I should only be saved as by *Fire*. Often have I panted after an Outward, as well as Inward, Conformity to the Will of God; greatly desiring to live as the first Christians did, when *all that believed were of one Soul*, and counted not *any of the Things they possessed* their own. But I saw the Time was not yet come; yet I could not but believe, in your Day something of this Kind would be.

WHEN I was about Seventeen, the LORD was pleased to shew me, that I was not to build Tabernacles here. For none of those ways I had cut out for myself, were such as He had appointed for me. I can't better describe what I then felt, than by transcribing Part of a Letter to a Friend.

“ THE LORD has been merciful above all I can ask or think. I found a greater Blessing the last Time I was in Town than ever.”
—And within this Day or two, I see much more clearly the Way in which I ought to walk. The LORD seems to call me to much more Activeness, so that I am sometimes ready to cry out, “ LORD, what would'st thou have me to

"do?" Then I consider'd, Can I do more for the Souls or Bodies of those about me? But this does not seem to be the Thing. What I am now led to wish for is, To serve those that are in CHRIST, both with Soul and Body. And as soon as the LORD has prepared me for his Work, and set me at Liberty, my firm Resolution is, by the Grace of GOD, to be wholly given up to the Church. I plainly see, I have no more to do with the World, than to allow myself the bare Necessaries of Life. And tho' it has pleased GOD, I should not have my Living to work for, That is no Reason my Hands should be idle. I would be as those described by St. *Paul*, *to bring up Children, to lodge Strangers, to be ready for the meanest Offices, to relieve the afflicted, to visit the Fatherless and Widows, and diligently follow after every good Work.*

Epping Forest, May 23, 1757.

I HAVE ever since found the same Impressions on my Soul; and when we came to this House, I felt a Kind of Rest I did not before, as if I was where GOD would have me to be. But one Day reflecting, that we had more Room than we wanted, and thinking, whom I should take in to fill it, it was strongly impress'd upon my Mind, *He that believeth shall not make Haste.* Not long after, the Thought of *bringing up Children* returned. But I was afraid of making Haste; 'till it appeared from many Reasons to be the Will of GOD, that we should take in one that offered. Soon after we were induced to receive another, and presently two more. I now saw our Family would be an increasing

creasing one; as we could not bring up even these Children properly, without a Person whose constant Business it should be, to teach them during the School-hours. For it was impossible *we* should do it long, while we were necessarily employed in so many other Things. I knew this, and the other Expences which must attend the keeping six or seven Children, would require an Hundred a Year more than I had. But I remembered again, *The LORD liveth*, and truly *hitherto he hath helped us*.

OUR Method of educating our Children is this. As our Design is to fit them for good Servants, we endeavour as early as possible, to inure them to Labour, Early-Rising and Cleanliness. We have now eleven. Three of these, (two of whom are eleven Years old, the other between nine and ten) rise at Four. One lights the Nursery Fire, one mine, the other, that below. At Five, the rest of the Family are called. And when the Children are dressed and have prayed, they go (in Summer) in the Garden from Six 'till half an Hour after, while the bigger ones make the Beds, and clean the Rooms. At half Hour after Six we all join in Family Prayer: At Seven breakfast in the same Room; two or three upon Herb Tea, the rest upon Milk-porridge. At Eight, the Bell rings for School, where they continue 'till Twelve; and then after a few Minutes spent in Prayer, come to us. In Winter, this is their Hour for Exercise, instead of the Morning and Evening. In hot Weather we read to them something they are pleased with, or converse familiarly, so as (without seeming to aim at it) to instil into them Principles of Religion, at the same Time

A 6

giving

giving them some Kind of Employ, which is rather Amusement than Business: Yet it just takes off the Appearance of Idleness. For, from the very Beginning, they have been carefully taught, never to do any Thing, but what they could give GOD a Reason for. On this Account we never use the Term *Play*, nor suffer any to give them those Toys or Playthings, which Children are usually brought up to spend half their Time in. And when some of these were privately given, they threw them aside without any bidding. Their Recreation consists in diversifying their Business, which is varied even during their School-Hours. Only the very little ones now and then run in the Garden for a quarter of an Hour; but still with a Degree of Seriousness; and they know it is for their Health. At One we dine: At Two School begins again, except on *Saturdays*. At Five they return to us. About Six they sup. At half after Six they begin to be washed, and at Seven go to Bed. Indeed in Summer their Supper is sooner, so that they have an Hour with us in the Garden. During this Time they are all employed, some in watering, others in fetching the Water, the rest in pumping. And Work of this Kind they are all very fond of.

BUT O! what a Want of Wisdom do I find! I see in Them, what I cannot put in Practice. I want the Children not to be a Moment from under the *Eye* and the *Attention* of some judicious Person: So that if the eleven Children were at Work in so many different Parts of the Garden, one might observe, that each works *diligently*. For Sloth in Temporals always produces Sloth in Spirituals. Yet at the same
Time

Time their Work must not be made a *Task*; for then it would not answer the End. Again, their Thoughts all the Day long will naturally tend to Evil. And their Words will be trifling. To *bid* them do otherwise, avails no more, than to bid the Blackamoor be white. And to reprove them continually, would be a Burden greater than they could bear. But if by little Stories and Hints, their Minds could be insensibly drawn to better Subjects, they would be at length brought to remember, That GOD is present, and is looking upon them every Moment. When I consider this, and many more Things, which I see afar off, but cannot bring to effect, I am constrained to say, “O LORD! I am “not yet *thoroughly furnished to every good Work.*”

SOME may say, “This is worldly Wisdom, “not Gospel Simplicity. And after all you “cannot change their Hearts.” Most certain. But hath not GOD said, *Train up a Child in the Way it should go?* Now I think true Simplicity is to obey GOD, and leave the Consequence to him.

AND we have already Reason to believe, our Labour has not been in vain. There are Dawnings of Grace in most of the Children. Some of them GOD was pleased to bless in a particular Manner, on the 7th of *June* last. In the Evening, *Betty L—*, about ten Years old, was much concerned for one of the little ones, who had stole something. When they went to Bed, not knowing they were overheard, they began to converse freely; and *Betty L—* said, “Let us go to Prayer for *H—s* Soul.” She then prayed in a very affecting Manner. After-wards

wards one about eight prayed, pleading much for *H—*, and added, "LORD, don't let us so think of her Sin, as to forget our own. LORD, don't let us laugh and trifle, and talk of foolish Things when we come off our Knees, but make us Christians." One of them then thanked GOD, for their "good Corrections, and Teaching," and said "LORD, if we are not Christians, we shall be more punished than others." When they had done, *Nancy Tripp* went in to undress them. She first went to Prayer with them as usual, and the Spirit of Conviction fell on *Betty L—* in a very uncommon Manner. We came up and found her in an exceeding great Agony: She was the very Picture of Terror. The Veins of her Neck were as if they would burst. She wrung her Hands, and cried with a bitter Cry, "O my Sins!" I believe more than an hundred Times. She then broke out into such a Confession of her Original Sin, and Heart Sins, as was quite astonishing: Adding, "O! I have never done any Thing for *Thee* in my whole Life. I have broke all thy Laws, I have kept the Devil's Commandments; I have kept none of thy Commandments. May such a Wretch come to the LORD? Wilt thou receive me? Wilt thou pardon me? Wilt thou make me a Christian? Tell me, LORD, shall I go to Heaven or Hell? Shall I go to Heaven or Hell, LORD? O tell me! Shall I go to Heaven or Hell? Wilt thou make me a Christian? Wilt thou forgive me?" She then paused a little, and added, "But wilt thou, LORD? Yes, he will, he will. But wilt thou LORD? Yes, thou wilt, thou wilt." Mr. *Dornford* then gave out an Hymn.

She

She now seemed quite calm: The Horror which before appeared in her Countenance was gone, and had left a sweet Smile. Her Attention seemed quite fixt. And after remaining some Time with her Eyes upward, she said, "JESUS is smiling upon me." She had at the same Time a Sight of him as upon the Cross, saying, "I have pardoned all your Sins; and if you pray, I will give you abundant Love." After she had sat silent a while, she broke out, "O what a sweet Saviour he is! He has forgiven me all my Sins—All, all. LORD, thou wilt, thou hast forgiven me.—O let them be perfectly forgiven! But shall I ever sin again, LORD? O don't let me sin again." Some Time after, she said, "O what a sweet SAVIOUR thou art! What sweet Love is thine! O more such Love, more such Love as thine! But don't let me sin again! Fill me with Love that I may never sin again!"

THIS Scene was striking: But it was nothing to the Change that followed. She was of a far worse natural Temper, than any of the Children: But now it might in deed be said, "Love made her willing Heart in swift Obedience move." So great was the Change both in Will and Understanding, as plainly declared the Hand that wrought it.

WE sometimes hope, several of them will chuse to be entirely devoted to God. If so, they may continue together when they grow up, each following such an Employment as she is fit for, and all throwing the Produce of their Labour into a common Stock. And may not God be pleased to call some young Women,
not

not brought up with us, who have a Desire to devote themselves wholly to God, to cast in their Lot with us? Perhaps some who do not want, may be glad to get out of the Hurry of the World, at least for a Season, that the tender Flame may not be put out, nor any unhallowed Fires mix with it. How much is something of this Kind wanted? A Place of Refuge for the Weak and Unexperienced? How often do we see those who are just setting out in the good Way, either wholly turned aside, or at least persuaded to take up with a lower Way, than the Spirit of God at first pointed out?

BUT if ever this Design be brought to Perfection, it is God only that must chuse the Persons, and bring us together, as it is he only that *maketh Men to be of one Mind in an House*. And whosoever comes to us, must desire to be conformed to their crucified Head. We can promise them only *Poverty, Labour and Sorrow*, the inward and outward Cross. But when they embrace this with their whole Hearts, they assuredly experience, that in Poverty is Riches, in Labour Ease, and in Sorrow constant Rejoicing.

ALL this is in the Hand of my God, as also another Thought I had, concerning aged Widows. But so exceeding great is his Faithfulness, that I know not how to despair of any thing. A few of the many Instances hereof, which we have received, you must give me Leave to mention.

I HAVE been always led, since I had any Work of God upon my Soul, to walk by Faith
in

in outward things as well as inward. Hence I have frequently, when an Object of Distress presented, gone beyond my Income, believing GOD would make it up in the Time of Need. In this Confidence, I received four or five more Children, though I had nothing in Hand, and more Bedding and Cloaths were to be bought immediately. For this we wanted two Guineas directly. Some Friends sending us Word, they would call on such a Day; my Friend prayed, That GOD would put it into their Hearts to help us. They came, and one of them put two Guineas into my Hand. We praised the LORD, and received it as a Token for Good.

SOON after we were advised to put up a poor Box. I found great Reluctance to it, which convinced me, it requires less Grace in some Cases, to *give* than to *receive*. However, laying it before the LORD in Prayer, I saw it was his Will, and consented. So on *Tuesday, February 1*, it was put up in the Passage-room, with this Inscription, "For the Maintenance of a
" few poor Orphans, that they may be brought
" up in the Fear of the LORD." A few Days after we took out 2 s. 7 d. but no more for a great while. During this Time we were much straitened, not having the Nursery furnished, nor half the Necessaries for the Children. It was now strongly suggested, "You see you have
" done wrong, and GOD will not help you
" any more." But having recourse to Prayer, our Faith was strengthened.

SOON after, the following Thought was much imprest on my Mind. If CHRIST was now
upon

upon Earth, and in want of Food and Raiment, should I be afraid to give him mine, lest I should want it myself? Should I not rather say, "Let *all* I have be offered, for the "Necessities of my LORD. He is well able "to repay it, and if he is not, then let us "want together." I saw, the Case with the Children was the same, and that *what was done to one of these, was done to him*. A Light broke in upon my Mind which quite satisfied me, and constrained me to say, "LORD, thy Word "is enough, thou hast said, *Love one another, "as I have loved you: Let their Wants be "mine, my Substance theirs.*"

WE were now not only in want of the Things above-mentioned, but of Money to keep the House. Just then a Guinea was put into the Box, and soon after, another: In a few Days one brought us thirty Shillings, saying, "Fear "not: only believe." About the same Time we received four Guineas from another Hand, which helped us through that Quarter. To avoid Tedioufness, I pass over many other Helps which we received from Time to Time; confining myself to those wherein the Hand of the LORD is more eminently to be observed.

SOME Time since, being obliged to pay a Sum of Money in a Day's Time, and having none in the House, nor any due, I attempted to borrow it of a Friend, but cou'd not. I tried another, and was disappointed there also. Not knowing what to do, I went up Stairs and waited before the LORD, telling him I would yet *trust* him and *praise* him. Opening

ing the last Volume of Sermons, I cast my Eye on this Sentence, "CHRIST charges himself" with all our temporal Affairs, when we charge "ourselves with those that relate to his Glory." It was applied to my Heart with such a Power, as I had very seldom felt. And such a Sense of the immediate Presence of GOD seized my Soul as almost overwhelmed it. O what a Freedom of Spirit did I feel! I could truly say,

"All my Care on Thee is cast."

In the Evening, a Person desired to speak with me, and brought me a little above the Sum.

In Spring we were again reduced to about one Penny, and expected a Bill of two or three Pounds to be brought in every Hour. We looked to the LORD, and found him again to be a present Help. For while we were consulting what to do, a Basket came which one had sent us from *London*, with some Provisions, and a little Parcel, in which were four Pounds, three Shillings and nine Pence.

In *August* we had an Hour of Trial again. The Children being increased to Ten, we were in great Want of Linnen; but how to procure it for them we could not tell. I was unwilling to run farther in Debt, having already spent the two next Quarters before they came in, nor was that enough to pay what was owing. And I had nothing in the House. So we agreed to lay it before the LORD together. While I was alone, it was violently suggested, "There is so much of *Self* in all you do, that GOD
" is

“ is rather dishonoured than glorified thereby.” I said, “ LORD, I am the Purchase of thy Blood. I plead that only. And I believe thou wilt not leave me, nor forsake me.” Afterwards I felt much Peace. Rising from my Knees, I opened the Bible on the following Words. *Acquaint thyself now with him, and be at Peace; thereby shalt good come unto thee. Then — the Almighty shall be thy Defence, and thou shalt have plenty of Silver—Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established, and the Light shall shine on thy Ways.*

I FELT my Soul instantly strengthened. And every Word was so opened and applied, that to this Day it seems new whenever I read it: Particularly that Promise, *Thou shalt decree a thing, and it shall be established, and the Light shall shine on thy Ways.* Indeed the whole appeared more full and strong than I have Words to express.

Two or three Days after we received five Guineas; the same Day three more, and two from another Hand. In a little while we received four more, with a Promise of the same yearly. O my GOD, who would not trust thee? Who would not take thee at thy Word?

PERHAPS some will wonder, how one who has so great an Income as I, can ever experience Want. But you know what I have. You know likewise, that before I took any Children, I every Year spent more than my Income, trusting that GOD would supply what was lacking. Others may wonder at my present im-
prudent

prudent Way of proceeding; but I *know in whom I have believed*. Indeed had I sought the Praise of Men, I should have taken Care of myself rather than of others. For I know, *so long as thou dost well unto thyself, Men will speak well of thee*. But we have chose the Cross for our Portion, and we cannot give it up.

A FEW Days since having paid the Week's Bill, my Friend said, "We have but a few Shillings left." The *Tuesday* following I received two Letters. Opening one of them I was a little surprized, to find a Guinea inclosed, with the following Lines from one I had never conversed with.

Nov. 5, 1764.

"My dear Child,

WITH much Pleasure I heard of your charitable Design, which I pray GOD to bless and succeed. Be never discouraged, though Divine Wisdom should exercise you at Times, even with many, great and alarming Difficulties: For this is frequently the Way in which God leads his Children, in order to improve their Faith and Patience. But even supposing he should not succeed this Affair, according to your present Plan, yet he will never fail to bless those, who sincerely endeavour to promote his Honour, the Kingdom of the LORD JESUS, and the Good of Souls.

"I DESIRE that you would accept of the Inclosed, and that you would set me down as an annual Contributor of the same Sum. May the LORD JESUS CHRIST be with all of us: Forget us

us not in your Prayers. I am, with much Respect and Regard,

“ Your very affectionate Friend.”

THESE Lines were greatly blest to me, and I found much Thankfulness. In the other Letter was another Guinea inclosed, with these few Words: “ I have felt your Burden, and should
“ be thankful you had more Help. But per-
“ haps it is rather the Will of GOD con-
“ cerning you, to give you Day by Day your
“ Daily Bread. I pray him to be with you.” The same Night one brought half a Guinea from a Person unknown, who desired to be set down as an annual Contributor of two Guineas.

WHEN a yearly Subscription was first proposed, I was averse to it, fearing it might give Offence, till a very particular Friend, mentioned it to a few of her Acquaintance, unknown to us. Afterwards I was convinced, it was of GOD. It now amounts to about fourteen Pounds a Year.

OUR Family at present consists of sixteen: Eleven Children, one Teacher for them, one Servant, ourselves, and one lame with the Palsy.

WHEN I look back to last Christmas, I am astonished at the Lovingkindness of my GOD! What he hath done for us, and what he hath brought us through, I can easier bless him for, than repeat! One thing more I ask of him: And in this also he will hear me: That he would restore Sevenfold into the Bosom of those he has made helpful to us, either by Prayer, by Word or by Deed. And if a Cup of cold Water

is not forgotten before him, surely not one of these shall lose their Reward.

O SIR, we have so many Mercies, I know not how to leave off recounting them. *Now* I see that Design of GOD, in joining Sister R. and me together. It would have been impossible for me to have gone through my present Undertaking alone. I know, I have neither Grace for the Spiritual, nor Capacity for the Temporal Part. It is therefore in the greatest Tenderness, that our LORD has given her to us as a Mother. And I trust, both this and every Blessing, shall have the Effect which GOD designed in it.

I am,

M. B.

